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LETTERS

35

FROM

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

TO

ANNE MOWBRAY;

OR,

JUSTICE TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS,

THE CONSEQUENCE OF

TRUE PIETY.

"DO JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY, AND WALK HUMBLY
WITH THY GOD."

Wellington, Salop :

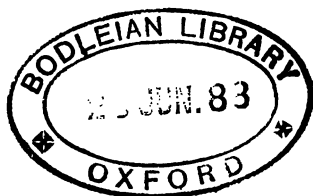
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1829.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

26-2-20



ADDRESS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I HAVE written the following pages for your instruction and entertainment; and I trust that while I have been writing them, I have remembered that, like you, I too have been young, and, consequently, ignorant of many of the simple truths which this little volume contains: and although I cannot say that I now am *old*, yet I am old enough to form a pretty correct judgment of the just value of temporal things, compared with those which are eternal. I am also fully persuaded, in my own mind, of the great importance of the latter compared with the former.

Your Bibles tell you, that *there is a rest prepared for the people of God*, and that this rest is promised to those who seek it by a patient continuance in well-doing. That you may be of this happy number, has been my inducement to write the following pages, in the hope that, by making you better acquainted with a few circumstances connected with Sacred History, you may study your Bibles with still greater advantage.

It has been my most anxious wish, to write in such a manner as to make you comprehend that Christianity is not a mere profession; it must be ever present to your minds, and influence every action of your lives. If you take upon you the name of Christians, you must endeavour to understand what Christianity requires. To do this effectually, you must read carefully, and try to discover the different duties which you are expected to perform. *Thinking* in this manner, and reading for

this purpose, will assist you in fixing important truths upon your minds; and, in time, those truths, will influence you to a right and steady conduct. But, above all, let me intreat you to give *conscience* fair play: never be tempted to do anything which conscience tells you is improper, or unbecoming your station in life; if inclination is in favour of it, consider well, and suppose you are going to advise some dear friend in whose conduct you were deeply interested, and it is quite clear that what you would wish a dear friend to do in like circumstances must be right for you; and determine to act accordingly. The good conduct which is merely the result of accident, can be of little value either to yourselves or others; and will be apt to fail you when the hour of temptation comes. On the contrary, the good conduct which arises from piety and love to God, strengthened by the Saviour's precept—*Do as you would be done*

unto, will be productive of the happiest consequences to yourselves, your families, and all with whom you may be connected.

With good consciences towards your God, and cheerful minds, you may look around you in this beautiful world, which is to be your home for a short time, and have a perpetual feast : each day will display before your admiring eyes new wonders ; and new pleasures will be your reward, if you study to make yourselves acquainted with the works of your almighty and heavenly Father. Frequent meditations on His power and goodness will lessen your bodily labour, and sweeten your hours of less active employment ; your burdens will be lightened, for you will ever have in remembrance that your particular situation in life, and all your power to perform your appointed duties, are His ordering, and your heart and understanding will tell you that all is good.

These are blessed feelings ; and if such



are the reward of our present imperfect endeavours to do the will of our heavenly Father, according to the example of the blessed Jesus ; how inconceivably great must be the riches of His grace, who hath declared, that, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the happiness which is prepared for those who love God and keep his commandments.* That you, my young fellow Christians, through the mercy of God, may be found among the happy number of His good and faithful servants, and enter into the joy of your Lord, is the sincere prayer of,

Yours, &c.

M—— R——

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LETTER I.

The Grove, April, 1827.

MY DEAR ANNE,

YOU will see by the date of this letter, that I have got to the end of my journey, and you will be glad to hear, that it was a safe and pleasant one. You will, I dare say, recollect expressing your surprise at my feeling so anxious, as the time for my leaving home drew near. You said, I remember, if you had my happy prospects, you should not think of looking so serious as I did. But, my dear Anne, you will, I believe, think differently, if you live to be my age, and should then have to leave a happy home, and all your dear and kind friends, to go among strangers, and to such a distant part of the country. But I promised to tell you all that I

have thought, as well as all that I have seen, on this long journey, and a great deal I find I have to say on both these subjects. I think I must begin from the moment when I shook your hand, and my dear father's, and received your good wishes, and my father's blessing ; and then the coach-door was shut, and I was left all alone : which was very well for me, for I confess to you that I cried bitterly. I felt so dejected, that I began to fancy that I had done wrong in accepting the situation my kind friend, Mrs. Smith, had procured for me ; and thought, in my sorrow at leaving my old friends, that I had nothing to recommend me to my new ones, except the good character given me by Mrs. Smith. I then began to think of all my obligations to her, of all she had taught me ; for she had not only taught me to do a great many things well and creditably, but she had taught me to *think* so very differently about many things. She had also been such a *sincere* friend in always telling me, not only when I had *done* wrong, but when I had *looked wrong, if I may say so*. And that is one

reason, my dear Anne, why I am so sorry to leave you; because you know I told you, before we became such friends as we are now, that if you could bear to hear me tell you whenever I thought you wrong, and still believe that I was your friend, who loved you too well to let you get into bad habits of any kind, when I could assist you in checking them at the beginning, I would not only suffer you to be with me sometimes, when I had nothing better to do, as you were pleased to say, but would contrive to have you with me some part of every day, that I might help you, as Mrs. Smith had helped me. I fear I shall make but a bad letter-writer, for I find that, instead of telling you all about my journey as I promised, and what I thought of all the new things I have seen, I am only repeating things which are as well known to you as to me. I dare say, I should have gone on writing in this way, if I had not been sent for, to read an hour to one of the ladies. Now I have a little spare time, I will try to tell you *all about* my journey. I was quite alone

till about eleven o'clock, when we stopped to change horses at a small but neat inn. The landlady came to the door; there was a lady leaning upon her arm, who looked very thin and pale, and so feeble, that it was with difficulty she could get into the coach. There was something so pleasing, yet so melancholy in her appearance, that I felt quite glad that she was not going to travel alone as I had done. She looked as if she wanted some one to speak words of comfort to her. I longed to say something kind, but I did not know how to begin, for she was superior to me, both in dress and appearance. As she did not appear to be very comfortably settled, I enquired if I could assist her. She replied, very gently, she should soon become accustomed to the motion of the coach, and then she should be better. After this, we had a great deal of pleasant conversation: and I found she was the daughter of a minister in the town we had just quitted; that she had married, about two years ago, a gentleman, who resided near Leeds. She was now returning home, after having

attended her mother in an illness, which had proved fatal about a fortnight before. She seemed to be deeply affected at leaving her father in his now solitary home ; but he was, she said, much attached to his congregation, and to them he wished to devote the few years of usefulness which might yet be his : he had many kind and valuable friends among them, who had grown old with him, and many among the young, who were like sons and daughters to him : and she concluded by saying, “ I know I do not leave him friendless, but I should have been happier, could I have had him near me.”

I was not a little rejoiced to find that this lady would travel with me till I should stop for the night ; and, to my great joy, she told me she knew the landlady of the inn where I was to stay all night. She had been a servant in the family, and she would request her to attend to me, which she did, and I was very comfortable. I set off the next morning, in better spirits than I had been in the day before : my travelling companions were very

pleasant. I learned from them the names of the principal towns through which we passed; but we stayed such a short time at each place, even when we had to take breakfast or dinner, that I had no opportunity of seeing any thing, and I have now only a very confused notion of them. I arrived at the end of my journey about six o'clock in the evening; the housekeeper, who appears a very nice woman, told me she had orders to get me tea, after which the ladies would see me. They welcomed me most kindly to my new *home*, which they trusted would prove a comfortable one to me; and after talking to me a little about my journey, they wished me good night, as they supposed, after the fatigue of travelling two days, I should be glad to go early to rest. I did not, dear Anne, sleep much; my thoughts were too busy, to let me sleep. I must, however, leave what I have to tell you of this family till some future opportunity, as I find that, by sending off my letter to-day, you will get it on Saturday; and I please myself with thinking, that about eight o'clock you

will be taking it to our house. I think I see you open the door, and going, with a light quick step, into the little parlour, where you will find my dear father and mother, seated at the table with the Bible before them, just beginning their evening preparation for the Sabbath ; you will read them my letter ; and then, I think, you will kneel down with them, and join your prayer of thanksgiving, with theirs, to Him who has brought me in safety to the end of my long journey ; and of supplication for a continuance of His blessing upon my humble, but earnest, endeavours to become more and more worthy of being called a disciple of his beloved Son. Let us always remember, my dear Anne, that, *the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much*. I know that my dear father will always unite your name with mine, whenever he addresses the Father of our spirits.—Let it be our care, that it is not in vain.

Give my affectionate love and duty to my parents, and my kind remembrances to

all friends who enquire after me, and be assured of the continued affection of your sincere friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER II.

The Grove, May, 1827.

MANY thanks, my dear Anne, for your welcome letter, and also for your kind attentions to my dear parents, who have both mentioned you in a manner which has gratified me much. My mother's words are,—“I cannot express myself in stronger terms than this: she is unto me as a daughter.” O, my dear Anne, how does a merciful God reward and bless us when we least expect it! How continually are we the objects of his gracious care! In comforting my dear parents in my absence, what a blessing will you prove to them, and how richly am I rewarded, for the little I have been able to do for you!

I can now tell you, from experience, how

I like my present employments, and also what is required of me.

The family consists of Mrs. Harriet Ethrington ; her sister, Mrs. Althorp, a widow lady ; and their niece, Miss Hume, a little girl about ten years of age : her father and mother are gone to India, where they will probably remain some years ; during which time, Miss Hume is to remain with her aunts, as she is considered too delicate to be sent to school. She is rather backward in her education, and she is not allowed to study much. She has only a music-master at present ; her aunts take charge of the rest, and I am to superintend the getting of the lessons, and to hear them entirely, if the ladies are prevented attending at school-hours. I expect to gain much myself, by this means ; for her books, both of instruction and amusement, contain information on many subjects, on which I am still ignorant. Miss Caroline is a fine child, but of a timid disposition, and, in consequence of her delicate health, a little *fretful sometimes*. Her aunts are very ac-

complished ladies, and so good, that I shall be very blameable if I do not profit by their example.

I think the best way of making you acquainted with my way of life, will be to give you a sort of history of one day. This I cannot do exactly, as our occupations vary according to circumstances. We are all early risers; sometimes I find I have half an hour to spare, and which I may employ as I like: this is the case this morning, and I have chosen to begin a letter to you. All the family attend at prayers, at a quarter before nine in the morning, and at ten at night. Miss Caroline and I breakfast at eight o'clock, and immediately after prayers we go out, if the morning is fine, and take a long walk; sometimes, we visit poor families in the neighbourhood, if any thing is wanted among them; at another time, we visit Mrs. Harriet's own school, which I must tell you more about in some other letter. When we return home, we go into our own school-room, where we are generally joined by one of the ladies, who re-

mains with us a great part of the morning, which we employ in various ways. The little girl has her lessons to attend to, while I am busy either making clothes for the poor, or in cutting out work, which has to be given either to poor families, or sent to the girls' school, to be made there; after which I have to read an hour to Mrs. Harriet before dinner. As her sight is not very good, she seldom reads, if she can get any one to read to her; but, if I am much engaged, her sister reads a little, and sometimes Miss Caroline wishes to read to her aunt. In the afternoon, Miss Hume prepares her lessons for the next day; I generally assist her with them, and then she reads some book of amusement to me while I work a little. While she is sewing, I settle my accounts. I have a great deal of shopping to do at times. I have got a great deal of experience by this means, and understand the value of things, and of *money* too, much better than when I came here. Deficient as I still am, I should have been much more *so*, had I not had the advantage of setting

down every thing for my mother, who always said, "If your income is ever so small, keep an exact account of every sixpence you lay out, that you may know at the end of the year that you have not spent too much." Now that I have an income of my own, I intend to be very particular, and have laid down a plan, which I hope I shall be able to keep to.

From what I have told you, you will see that I have sufficient occupation. Although the exact time cannot always be fixed, we go on very regularly upon the whole; and, as I endeavour to perform my duty each day, and never to go to bed till I have done all that is needful, I find, at the end of the week, that I have got tolerably well through my work, and I hope I shall improve when I have had more practice.

I must now, my dear Anne, renew my lessons to you, that my letter may, in some degree, prove useful. Indeed, I feel almost ashamed of having written so much about myself, but I wished to make you fully acquainted with my situation, and the op-

portunities I have of improving myself in things which may prove useful to us both.

I think I must pursue the plan we had just begun, and make the Scriptures the subject of our present improvement.—You remember you wished to have a better idea of the time when the events recorded in the Bible took place. You said, you had such confused notions about them, that you frequently found you had been talking of things as if they had happened since our Saviour's ministry, which you found afterwards had happened long before he was born; and that, in consequence of having made these mistakes, you were afraid to speak on these subjects, for fear of getting wrong again. Now, a little chronology would be very useful to you. In the Old Testament you read the history of what happened before Jesus Christ was born:—chronology teaches you in what year each extraordinary event took place;—and, if you should wish to know how the different *countries are situated in which the events*

took place; whether they were near each other, or in distant parts of the world, you would learn geography. I will begin by relating a few of the most important events mentioned in the first books of the Old Testament. After the account of the creation of the world, we read of the happy state of our first parents in Paradise.—Then follows the history of their disobedience, and the sad consequences to themselves and their posterity:—for the dreadful effects of sin having entered into the world are soon discovered; the people became so exceedingly wicked, that the Almighty determined to destroy every living creature by a flood.

Noah alone found grace in the eyes of the Lord. We are told that he was a good man, and perfect in his generations; and that he walked with God. Then we read of the calling of Abraham;—the history of Joseph and his brethren, and the important events which took place in Egypt, in consequence of his family settling there;—the severe *bondage* in which they were held by the

Egyptians, and the directions given by the Almighty, to Moses, to bring them out of Egypt to the promised land, and the account of the plagues which were inflicted upon the Egyptians, in consequence of Pharaoh's refusing to let them go.—All this is exceedingly interesting, as is also the account of their dwelling in the wilderness forty years ; this was a punishment for their murmurings and distrust of the power of the Almighty, to give them possession of the promised land. Their entrance into it, and the death of Moses, who was not permitted to accompany them, is very affecting. The whole of the Jewish history should be carefully studied by every young person.

All the events which happened before the birth of Christ, are dated from the creation of the world : and that you may get a clear idea of the time in which they took place, I will make out a list of some of the most important, with the year in which they are believed to have occurred. I should wish *you to learn them by heart.*

	Y. W.
The Great Flood happened in the year of the world	1656
The Call of Abraham	2083
The Departure of the Israelites from Egypt	2515
The Israelites entered the Promised Land .	2553
Solomon's Temple built	2992
The City of Jerusalem destroyed, and the People taken into Captivity	3416

The Y. W. at the top of these figures means the year of the world.

I should wish you to read, very attentively, those parts of the Old Testament which relate to these events ; and endeavour to associate the date with the event, so that you may think of them in connection, not as distinct things.

I find I must now conclude my Letter. With my affectionate love to my dear father and mother, I remain,

Your sincere friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER III.

The Grove, June, 1827.

MY DEAR ANNE,

I AM glad you like the plan I mentioned to you in my last letter ; and that you already begin to understand the Scripture history better. I was sure you would, if once you began to *think* seriously about it, for that is what I am particularly anxious for you to do. Thinking is quite as necessary as reading ; for, if you were to read the Bible half the day, and did not think about it while you were employed in the common concerns of life, it would do you very little good ; indeed, it is one of the great advantages of the Scriptures, to people employed as you and I are, that a little time serves us to *read a chapter* in the Bible ; but it takes a

long time to think upon it, so as to understand it properly ; because we must first consider what duty it inculcates, and how far we are deficient in the performance of it, and endeavour to act better in future, remembering, at the same time, that, though God is long-suffering, and full of mercy, He will not be mocked ; therefore our desire to improve, must be an *earnest* desire. And when we feel that it is so, we can turn our thoughts with comfort to His promise of forbearance and goodness, and readiness to forgive, upon repentance and amendment ; and to the consoling assurance, that, *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that love him and keep his commandments* : which encourages us to renew our efforts to obtain His approbation,—for how often, and how tenderly, our earthly father forgives our faults, we all know.

I will now give you a little more chronology, and it will only be a little that will be necessary for you, in order to connect the *remaining* great events of the historical part

of the Old Testament. The last date I gave you was the destruction of the magnificent temple at Jerusalem, and also of the city itself, and of the people being taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. They remained in captivity seventy years: during this time, you know, Daniel lived, and it is supposed that it was at his request that Cyrus issued the decree for the captives to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild the Temple.

Y. W.

Cyrus puts an end to the Captivity . . .	3468
The Temple built on Mount Gerizim* . .	3596
Judas Maccabæus lived	3838
Jesus Christ born	4004

These four dates are all that is necessary for you to learn for the five hundred and thirty-six years between the return from the captivity and the birth of Christ. After which time, all Christians date from the birth of our Saviour, instead of from the creation of the world.

* *In this temple the Samaritans worshipped.*

All the Scripture history connected with the captivity is exceedingly interesting, as well as that which relates the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, and the whole account of the rebuilding of the city and the Temple, and the circumstances which occurred from that time till the preaching of the Gospel, and the rejection of the Messiah, which was attended with such fatal consequences to the Jewish nation.

The Israelites were called Jews after the captivity, in consequence of the fifty thousand who went up to rebuild the Temple, being chiefly of the kingdom of Judah, though there were some Israelites among them.

The history of this people is so wonderful, and the punishment they have undergone in consequence of their rejection of the Messiah so awful, that it has always made a strong impression upon my mind. I think of them as the chosen people of God, supported by his strong arm, so that no earthly power could prevail against them. While all the nations around them were worship-

ping they knew not what, they were favoured with the knowledge of the one living and true God, who gave them visible signs of His approbation and love, by blessing them with peace and prosperity, whenever they obeyed His commandments; and when they fell into the sin of idolatry they were mercifully reminded of the error of their way, by misfortunes and afflictions of various kinds. From the time they took possession of the promised land, they were exceedingly prosperous; and the account of the reign of King Solomon shews how rich and important a people they had become. Now we behold them, with a very few exceptions, a poor and despised race, belonging to no country, living in the midst of a people, and feeling that, though dwelling among them, they have no home in their hearts; not persecuted indeed, as in former times, but frequently reviled by the ignorant and unfeeling, occasionally exciting compassion, but seldom experiencing that tender affection and brotherly love, which, as Christians, we *ought to exercise towards all our brethren*

of mankind. It is not thus we should treat God's chosen people ; and we dishonour the Master, whose followers we desire to be accounted, when we treat the poor and the afflicted with scorn and derision. When we see a child punished by its earthly parents, for disobedience, or any other fault, do we add to its unhappy state by our unkindness ? Do we not, rather, by gentleness and persuasion, try to bring it back to its duty, and intercede for it to be forgiven ? So ought we as Christians, profiting by the example and precepts of our Saviour, to try, by every means in our power, to bring this long afflicted people into the fold of Christ. They should be remembered in our prayers : when we pray that *we* may be forgiven our sins, we should pray that *they* also may be forgiven ; this will soften our hearts towards them, and make us more desirous to avail ourselves of any opportunity that may offer, of associating with them ; by which means we may, in some degree, prove instrumental to their conversion to the *Christian faith*.

You know, you and I have often talked about the Jews, and you have wondered at me for thinking so much about them; but, my dear Anne, Christians *should* think about them: their history is most instructive, and from it we may learn to cultivate a teachable spirit, and to take care that we keep our minds open to conviction, and not set our hearts against a thing before we have given it proper consideration.

Since I wrote to you last, I have become acquainted with a young couple who have only been married a few months. I am very much pleased with them both, but I must tell you more about them in my next letter.

I expect to hear that you continue to feel as much interested in the Jewish history as I could wish. If you do not, you will disappoint the expectations of

Your truly affectionate friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER IV.

The Grove, July, 1827.

MY DEAR ANNE,

YOU gratified me exceedingly by what you said in your last letter: it was what I wished, and hoped; yet sometimes I felt afraid that I might have failed to interest, from my manner of expressing myself. And then I thought, if I could talk to you for half an hour, I might succeed better. I am now quite satisfied, and I am sure, the more you consider the present state of the Jews, the more compassion you will feel for them. Do you not wish that good, gentle, old Jacob, and his daughter, were still living near you? How differently would you now feel towards them! I can well imagine what a kind friend


you would now be to the poor neglected Ruth, whose delicate health and sorrowful countenance might well excite compassion. I cannot think how you could resist them; I should certainly have joined her in some of her walks, and offered my arm to assist her in getting home when she appeared so much fatigued. I often regret that I was from home during the time they lived in N——, for, notwithstanding your prejudices, you have always described them in a way which has left a very favourable impression on my mind, for they must certainly have possessed a mild and forbearing spirit.

I have heard lately of a Jewish gentleman, who attends regularly at a Christian place of worship, and brings his children with him. He says his children can get religious instruction there, which cannot be obtained in their synagogues as they exist at present. To come in this way to learn of Christians, shews such a willing mind, and such an earnest desire to train up his children *in the way they should go*, that I feel per-

suaded the blessed light of the Gospel will, in due time, reach his heart, and that he and his household will one day confess, that, *Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

I will now mention a few things relating to the Old Testament history, which I think it desirable you should know, and which will give an interest to many passages in Scripture which you might otherwise not very well understand.

The land of *Canaan*, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, was, after the Israelites took possession of it, called the *Land of Israel*; afterwards it was called *Palestine*, from the Philistines, who inhabited the southern coasts, and *Judea*, from Judah, the chief tribe of the Israelites. It is also frequently called the *Land of Promise*. And now it is very generally called the *Holy Land*. If you did not know this, you might get confused with the idea that the same circumstances had happened in different countries, when, in fact, they all happened in the land of *Judea*. You should also know



that, although the Jews were permitted to return to their own country, by Cyrus, they continued in subjection to the Persians about two hundred years. The country was then taken possession of by the kings of Egypt, who carried away many thousands of the inhabitants.

About a hundred and seventy years before Christ, they underwent a severe persecution from the Syrians. Judas Maccabæus rescued them from this yoke ; and under the Maccabees they regained almost all the possessions of the twelve tribes. In a contest between two of the Maccabees, they appealed to the Roman general, Pompey, and he made Judea tributary to the Romans.

About the year thirty-seven before Christ, Herod, supported by the Roman power, ascended the throne of Judea, and at the close of his reign our Saviour was born. After Herod's death, the nation was governed by tetrarchs, who were subject to the control of the Romans. The Jews were severely oppressed under this government ; *and in the reign of the Roman emperor,*

Nero, they openly revolted, and commenced the fatal war, which ended in the total destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus, who was afterwards Emperor of Rome. This event, which completely annihilated the Jewish state and nation, happened in the year seventy-one of the Christian era. Thus you see that God's judgments were speedily executed; for, in about forty years after they rejected and crucified the Saviour, their holy city was destroyed, and they were scattered abroad among the nations, as sheep having no shepherd. In this state they have remained nearly eighteen hundred years. When it may please God to restore them, and again lift up the light of his countenance upon them, we know not; but we know that, *whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* In the mean time, we must surely pity them, and not add to their affliction, by treating them with unkindness or contempt.

Jerusalem was rebuilt, by the Roman emperor Adrian, in the year of our Lord

132; since which time it has been taken and plundered by the Saracens; retaken by the Christians; and now it belongs to the Turks. At present it is only famous for what it has been.

In the eleventh century, many Christian princes in Europe joined, and went with a considerable army to take it from the Saracens. This was called the holy war; and as all those who went to it wore a cross upon their breasts, it was called a crusade; and they were called crusaders.

I hope you now have a pretty clear idea of the Jewish history. I should therefore recommend you to begin to read the New Testament, studying it carefully: you should read the Four Gospels several times, and make yourself fully acquainted with what circumstances are related in each, and with those which are only related in one or two of them. Apply to me, if you want any information, and if I cannot give it you, I am sure I can get it from either of the ladies, who are very kind in talking to me on *various subjects*. Sometimes, after I have been

reading to Mrs. Harriet, she encourages me to ask her questions, concerning things which appear quite new to me ; and she has lent me some excellent books : these I read principally in an evening, after the little girl is gone to bed, and when I have done up my accounts ; I then sit down and read with true enjoyment, till half after ten, the time I have fixed upon as proper for me to go to bed, as I rise sometimes at five, and never later than six.

I suppose, from your saying in your letter that you are glad to hear that Mrs. Smith is going to establish a book-society, that you intend to become a subscriber ; this will be a great advantage to you and the rest of the young people, as she is sure to select the best books both for your instruction and amusement. I wish you would call upon her, and tell her you have heard that she is going to form this society, and offer your services to assist her in any way in which she can make you useful ; it will be pleasant to her to find that it is *likely to be acceptable to the young people.*

And if she should employ you a little, it *will* be a great improvement to you. Now do not, my dear Anne, fancy that you cannot do any thing well enough to make it proper for you to offer your services ; if you should not do well at first, you will learn to do better with practice ; you can never expect to improve without it : and if we do not exercise our talents, be they ever so small, we are undeserving of what has been bestowed : so take courage, and let me hear in your next letter that you have been to Mrs. Smith's.

Give my love and duty to my parents ; and, with love to yourself, and my other friends, believe me

Your sincere friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER V.

The Grove, August, 1827.

MY DEAR ANNE,

I PROMISED, in one of my letters, to give you some account of my new friends, Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson. He is a very nice, clever young man, and attends in several families in the neighbourhood, and has a class three times a week at his own house. He teaches Latin, Geography, Astronomy, and some other things. His wife was governess in one of the families where he attends, and, since her marriage, she has begun an infant-school of a superior kind; and happy little infants they are that go to her. She has about twelve or fourteen boys and girls, none less than three years of age, and none above six. Sometimes when I have an hour

to spare, I go and spend it with her during her school-time, that I may learn something of her plans: this is for your benefit, you must understand, as I have a great wish that you should begin a school of this sort by and by; it will exactly suit you; you will be so gentle with the children, and you will not, I think, frighten yourself with the idea that you cannot teach *them* any thing: from you they will learn gentleness, humility, and kindness; for they will soon discover that you possess these qualities, and love and respect you accordingly. Children are very quick-sighted to the faults of older people, but they are also easily gained by kindness, which may be shewn without any improper indulgence.

Infant-schools are now becoming very general in large towns; therefore I hope it will not be long before there is one established at N——: if there should be such a thing talked of, I wish you would endeavour to make it known that you would be a candidate for the situation of mistress: you would *probably* succeed, and I am sure you would

very soon be interested in the employment. Our little school is just the kind of thing which would have suited you. It is Mrs. Harriet's school, and is very near the house, so that she can visit it for half an hour at any time she is at leisure, and feels disposed to do so. You have only to go down the lawn, across a little shrubbery, and through a gate into a close, or field, in which stands the school-house: it consists of one large room on the ground-floor, for the school-room, and one above for the mistress to live in. There is one large window in each room. They are now hung round with honeysuckles and roses. In the lower part of the field there is a fine large tree, with a seat round it, and under this tree you will generally see most of the children assembled during play-hours in fine weather. There are low benches placed round the school-room, for the children to sit upon, leaving a space at the top of the room, in which is placed a chair for the mistress, with a table before it. There are now about twelve *scholars*.

One morning, when I was in the school, a little before twelve o'clock, the time when the children kneel down, and one of the older ones repeats a short prayer, a very nice looking young man came in, and stood near the door ; he did not speak, but I saw that he and the mistress just exchanged looks, which proved that he was not an unexpected guest. As soon as the little monitor had laid the slates, which she had been collecting, upon the table, all knelt down to prayer, after which most of the children left the room: the young man then came forward, and, giving a neat small basket to a little girl, said, "I will call for you in the afternoon," and then left the room. When he was gone, and the little girl sent into the field to play, the mistress told me that soon after the child came to school, the father happened to come with her dinner, just as they were beginning the prayer ; on speaking to him at its conclusion, she saw the tears standing in his eyes: he told her he had been much affected, for he had never seen such a sight *before*, and asked her if she would allow

him to come every day at the same time. You may easily suppose how readily this request was granted; and he comes regularly: he never stops after prayers, but gives the child its dinner, and kisses it. In the evening, when he comes to take her home, he always enquires if she has behaved well during the day. I rejoice to say, this good father has generally the satisfaction of hearing that she has been attentive and obedient. The child is not particularly engaging in her appearance, but she is gentle and rather serious looking; there is a neatness and propriety in her appearance, even when she is at play, that is very prepossessing.*

When I look around, and see how much is now done by the higher classes of society, to improve the lower ranks in those things which concern not only their present comfort, but their future happiness, I cannot help exclaiming, *Truly, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage*; for nothing can be so gra-

* The writer was present at this scene.

tifying as to live among good and sensible people, whose happiness consists in improving the condition of their more humble neighbours ; not only clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, but supplying them also with the bread of life, so that we may, with truth, say, *The poor have the Gospel preached to them.* As far as my observation goes, with thankful hearts do they receive it. I do not mean to say that I have not met with some who had neither seeing eyes, nor hearing ears, but, generally speaking, the poor receive the word with thankfulness ; and I think I can already perceive a great improvement among the young people. I have seen several instances of the good effects produced by making children early understand that this life must be very, *very* short, when compared with the life which is to come ; that their *trials* are to be in this short life, their *reward* in the *eternal* life, which is to follow ; and that if they truly love God, they will always wish to please Him ; therefore they must, at all times, act *in obedience* to His commands, remember-

ing that this good God, who is daily blessing them, sees them at all times, and knows at all times what they are thinking, as well as what they are saying or doing. If this is properly impressed upon their minds, they will, by degrees, acquire a purity and singleness of heart, which is sure to produce right conduct. I hope I have not dwelt too long on this subject, but I thought it might prove useful to you, if you should be placed in the situation I wish you to undertake.

I am very much puzzled how to advise you respecting Nancy Wood. I think, for the present, I would try to induce her to come to you, whenever she can be spared from home for an hour ; but I would employ that hour rather differently, instead of walking as you used to do, when she was a good, industrious girl, who required a holiday now and then, and knew how to enjoy it cheerfully and properly ; I would now tell her to bring some work with her, and, as you have a great many nice books, you can read, and work, and talk. With your *steady principles*, you may do a great deal

for her, by talking seriously and kindly to her. What very mistaken ideas she has formed of religion, poor girl ! I hope you may succeed in removing this sad error, and prevail upon her not to make every disappointment she meets with a vexation, or to be angry because things do not turn out as she wishes or expects : she thus becomes dissatisfied with herself, and can never be happy till she thinks and acts differently. You must try to convince her, in the first place, that God is a merciful and kind Father, never afflicting us but for our good. In short, that if she is to be happy, she must joy in believing that *all* is good which comes from God. She must endeavour to have God ever in her thoughts ; she must have a heart ready to acknowledge His hand in all the blessings she receives, and trust that even her sorrows will be turned into joy, if she is but patient and humble under them : and she may rest assured, that when she no longer requires them, they will be removed. If you can but teach her true *Christian* humility, you need do no more to

make her happy, for she will then feel that she daily enjoys blessings more than she can number, and far beyond what she deserves.

What a pity it is that she has taken up the idea that a religious life must be dull and gloomy ; as if piety requires us to relinquish any of the real enjoyments of life. God loves a cheerful heart, and has given us all things richly to enjoy ; but if we would please Him, we must enjoy them *reasonably*, as His rational creatures. And surely no one can be so ignorant as to suppose that true happiness is to be found in doing those things which God has commanded us not to do ; that to live in the manner which he recommends to us must be dull, and uninteresting, and joyless ; or that to disobey His commands is to find happiness, and peace, and joy. How dreadfully mistaken are all who act as if these were their notions of Him who tells us, that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth all those who love and trust in Him.

My dear Anne, if you could but inspire her with a joyful hope, and well-grounded

trust in God, that the circumstances which she is placed are the best fitted make her happy, if she turns them to proper account, her present uneasy feelings would soon be exchanged for the more blessed ones of gratitude, thankfulness, and joy.

That God may bless your endeavours this and every other good work which you may undertake, is the prayer of your true affectionate friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAM

LETTER VI.

The Grove, September 30th, 1827.

I HAVE been much longer in writing to you, my dear Anne, in consequence of our having had a great deal of company staying in the house for the last six weeks; it has been a busy, but most happy time to us all.

The weather has been remarkably fine, and the country in this neighbourhood is very beautiful, so that during the time of the harvest, when the reapers were in the fields, and then when they were leading the corn home, and stacking it for the winter, and the gleaners, old and young, were scattered about, or, towards evening, were returning home with their little store upon *their heads*; it was a most joyful sight, and

my dear little girl seemed to gain health and spirits daily. She is a sweet little companion ; and, as she had never been out of London till this summer, the country is quite new to her, and she is interested in every thing.

You would be quite amused could you see her surprise, at my being able to tell her the names of many of the wild flowers ; and earlier in the summer, when we were walking, and she admired a field at a short distance from us, she was astonished when I said, " Yes, it is very beautiful, it is wheat ;" or, " Yes, that is a field of oats." She thought it so difficult to know the different kinds of corn. Now she knows them as well as I do ; and, as she has a very good sight, she amuses herself sometimes, by trying to puzzle me, saying, " Do you see that field far, far beyond the church, about half way up the hill? I think you can't tell me what that is." If she succeeds in puzzling me, which she does sometimes, it is a matter of great rejoicing.

When I came here, her knowledge of

'birds extended no further than the little canary bird she had in London, and a parrot which she had seen sometimes at the house of a lady where she visited occasionally with her mamma. I think the note of the cuckoo took her fancy more than the song of any of the other birds; and when I told her, about the end of June, that she would not hear it much longer, she wished she could hear it all the summer. I told her, I thought next spring, when she heard it for the first time, it would be a much more joyful feeling than if she had been accustomed to hear it the whole year round. In the gardens she is delighted to see the birds teaching the young ones to fly; but she has been most surprised at hearing that many birds travel to other countries, to spend the winter, and come to us again, when the warm weather returns, in the spring. She thinks it a most wonderful thing, that the swallows travel first into Spain, from thence to Gibraltar, then pass to the northern shores of Africa, and really return the same way, in the spring, to Great

Britain. She is learning geography, and understands pretty well how great the distance is for these little creatures to travel twice in the year. You may not know quite so well perhaps, but if you will ask my father to shew you the map, he will be able to give you a pretty good idea of it. She is also quite pleased to hear, that if we lose some birds because the cold weather is coming, we may expect to see others arrive from the colder countries in the north; and she thinks she shall love the fieldfare and the redwing very much, for coming to us when the swallows are forsaking us, because the winter is coming. We are now listening every day, in our walks, for the sweet songs of the woodlark, and the thrush, and the blackbird, as I told her they would begin to sing again about this time; for it is observed that no birds are heard to sing after June: it seems as if they were oppressed and languid during the excessive heat of summer. She thinks I know such a great deal about these things that I must be very clever in every thing; and when I tell her, that

people who live in the country learn these things when they are very young, she says, she is sure she might have lived all her life in the country without knowing any thing about them, if I had not been so kind as to tell her ; and she is sure there are far more nice things to see, and talk of, in the country, than in London. I told her, they were quite different things ; and I believed little girls like her would be much happier, and learn what was suited to their age, with more pleasure, in the country than in any great city, but that people who studied things which neither she nor I understood at present, such as the arts and sciences, found great advantages in going to London. She could not, however, be persuaded that London could be half so pleasant, to any body, as being in the country, and concluded by saying, " I have heard aunt Harriet say, that she has often observed, that good and pious people have been lovers of the country, and of solitude : now I don't think I am very fond of solitude *yet*, but I do love the country better *and better every day.*" I was glad to find

that she knew herself so well, for she certainly does not love solitude or silence at present.

I find I am improving very much, in consequence of reading such nice books as I meet with here; indeed, I have become so fond of reading, that I have determined to limit myself to half an hour in the morning, and an hour at night before I go to bed. I had to consider first how much time I might conscientiously employ in this way; and having made up my mind, I make a point of never exceeding it. I know, by the ladies giving me books, that they do not wish to claim all my time, but to allow me to employ a part in improving myself; so, after consulting my *conscience*, I thought half an hour in the morning, as I like to rise very early, and an hour at night, were very allowable. I hope you will think so too, and then I shall feel satisfied that I have done right, and not been unreasonable.

I met with something in a book the other day, which I just opened by chance, while I was waiting in Mrs. Harriet's dressing-room,

till she was ready for me to begin to read to her, with which, as I think, you will be as much struck as I was. I shall give you the passage. It is from a work on education, addressed to ladies in high life ; but there are many things which I can understand, and find very interesting, and may indeed suit every body, for the author recommends all young ladies to think less about this world, and all the vain things which belong to it, and to turn their thoughts oftener to Him who is the Maker and Giver of all, and to consider how great a difference there is between time and eternity ; and to think more frequently on the perfection of all which God has made, and how well each thing is suited to the purpose for which it is intended : but I cannot do justice to it, and will therefore give it you in the author's own words.

“ In the study of geography and natural history, (natural history means the history of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, as they are called,) the attention should be *habitually* turned to the goodness of Provi-

dence, who commonly adapts ~~the~~ various productions of climates to the peculiar wants of the respective inhabitants. To illustrate my meaning by one or two instances out of a thousand. The reader may be led to admire the considerate goodness of Providence in having caused the spiry fir, whose slender foliage does not obstruct the beams of the sun, to grow in the dreary regions of the north, whose shivering inhabitants could spare none of its scanty rays; while, in the torrid zone, the palm-tree, the plantain, and the banana spread their umbrella leaves to break the almost intolerable fervours of a vertical sun. How the camel, who is the sole carrier of all the merchandise of Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Arabia, and Barbary, who is obliged to transport his incredible burdens through countries in which pasture is so rare, can subsist twenty-four hours without food, and can travel, loaded, many days without water, through dry and dusty deserts, which supply none; and all this *not from the habit but from the conformation of the animal*, for naturalists make

this conformity of powers to climate, a rule of judgment in ascertaining the native countries of animals, and always determine it to be that to which their powers and properties are most appropriate."

If you should find any words in this extract which you do not quite understand, you had better look for them in the dictionary. I think there may be two or three which you may be a little at a loss about; and if the dictionary does not satisfy you, ask some person who you think can explain them properly. I am sure my father could often help you in that way; and he would be pleased with your applying to him. He has always told me not to be satisfied with reading a book, but to take care that I understand it, or my reading would be quite useless. I now find the advantage of it; for, when Miss Caroline is reading, she often asks me the meaning of things she does not understand, and I find I can frequently inform her. This gives me the greatest pleasure; for I find that I have

sometimes to explain things which my father has formerly explained to me, and I can do it in his own words, so well do I remember them. Farewell, my dear Anne.

Believe me ever your true friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER VII.

The Grove, November, 1827.

MY DEAR ANNE,

I AM not at all surprised at your account of Nancy Wood. I would not have you feel discouraged at her present state of mind : it is by no means unusual for persons who have been fond of mirth, and spent their time idly, to become infected with gloomy notions, and to complain much of the troubles and afflictions of life. But we should look with pity on such persons, and endeavour to lead them to more rational and tranquil thoughts, that they may, by degrees, obtain peace and contentment under all circumstances. As Nancy is so much attached to you, she will in time, and insensibly to herself, begin to think on

many subjects, as you think, from the habit of listening to you with attention ; and, at the same time, seeing that yours is a happy and useful life, she will the more easily be induced to follow your advice. If you can supply her with proper books, the amusement and instruction she will gain from them, will help to set all to rights : and you will, I trust, have the satisfaction of seeing her cheerful, but not gay ;—serious, but, I trust, not gloomy. Thus, by degrees, flowers will spring up to adorn her path, instead of the thorns and briars which have so long troubled her ; and, in her better state of mind, she will banish all over-anxious thoughts, either for herself or others. Observe, I do not mean that we must not feel pity for others, when they are under affliction, or visited by calamities, which our present nature subjects us to ; far from it. But the feelings of pity which I would recommend, are so beautifully described by Mrs. Barbauld, in one of her hymns, that I will transcribe it for you, and you can give *it to Nancy*.

“ Behold ! where, breathing love divine,
Our dying Master stands ;
His weeping followers gathering round,
Receive his last commands.

“ From that mild Teacher’s parting lips,
What tender accents fell !
The gentle precept which he gave,
Became its Author well.

“ Blest is the man, whose softening heart
Feels all another’s pain ;
To whom the supplicating eye
Was never rais’d in vain.

“ Whose breast expands with generous warmth,
A stranger’s woes to feel,
And bleeds in pity o’er the wound
He wants the power to heal.

“ He spreads his kind supporting arms,
To every child of grief ;
His secret bounty largely flows,
And brings unask’d relief.

“ To gentle offices of love,
His feet are never slow ;
He views, through mercy’s melting eye,
A brother in a foe.

“To him protection shall be shewn;
And mercy from above
Descend on those who thus fulfil
The perfect law of love.

“Peace, from the bosom of his God,
My peace, to him I give,
And when he kneels before the throne,
His trembling soul shall live.”

I should strongly recommend Nancy to commit pieces of this sort to memory: they will furnish her with agreeable and grateful thoughts, and help to cheer her mind in those hours of sadness, when she has, perhaps, no friend near her to talk to.

I really am so happy myself, that I feel desirous of doing all in my power to lead those who are younger, and more inexperienced, to such employments as may prove useful and satisfactory to them. My situation here is exactly such as suits my disposition. The two older ladies treat me with the greatest kindness; and, as they see I am desirous of improving myself as much *as possible*, they frequently explain things

to me, after I have been reading to them, when they think there has been any thing which I could not understand. In short, they treat me more like a friend than a servant. I am under no restraints, but those of gratitude and justice, which will not suffer me to be idle where I know myself to be dependent.

I continue to like my friend, Mrs. Atkinson. Her conversation is innocent and agreeable. I find she has never seen much society, and her leisure hours have been spent in reading good and useful books. She was only sixteen when she first went out to be a governess; and as the children she had the charge of were very young, she was constantly with them till eight o'clock at night, when they went to bed. She says she might then, if she had chosen it, have joined the family, but she preferred being alone, as she wished to read and write occasionally, and, sometimes, to *think* for the next day. To some people she might, perhaps, appear a little precise; but it is quite natural, and perfectly unaffected. Her

looks, her words, her whole behaviour, have an air of sanctity; and her countenance is remarkably sweet. She always reminds me of this description of a female character.—“Her hand seeketh employment; her foot delighteth not in gadding abroad.” “She is clothed with neatness; humility and meekness are as a crown of glory circling her head.” “Sweetness and innocence are in her mind; decency is in all her words; in her answers are mildness and truth.” “Submission and obedience are the lessons of her life; and peace and happiness are her reward. She presideth in her house, and there is peace: she commandeth with judgment, and is obeyed. Before her steps walketh prudence; and virtue attendeth at her right hand.”

I have spent two or three delightful evenings lately with these friends. I generally go to them about eight o'clock, and stay till nine: this I can do perhaps once a week. Mr. Atkinson is so good as to call for me, and walk home with me again.

I am sure I have no reason to call this the

“gloomy month of November.” Though the days are short, and we have had much rain, still we have occasionally had some pleasant weather, which we have enjoyed much. I have been particularly struck with the beauty of the heavens on a clear frosty night. I think I never saw the stars so bright, as they were yesterday evening, as I returned home. Mr. Atkinson is particularly fond of astronomy; and he has made me understand some things, which used to puzzle me very much. I think I now really understand, that our earth moves round the sun, instead of the sun coming to us every morning, as I used to think it did. I can now fancy our world travelling to the sun, just, as in travelling, we come to a milestone, or to a turnpike-gate, or to a village; and it is the same thing on the water. You remember once, when we were on the river, you said, “Here is a boat *coming*, but I don’t see any one in it;” and when *we came* to the *boat*, we saw it was what is called aground, in consequence of being deeply laden, and it was waiting till the

tide came up, and the men were not to be seen.

This world goes round the sun in three hundred and sixty-five days, and about six hours. This is called the annual motion of the earth, and completes what we call a year.

The next division of time which we have, is a month. We have what are called calendar months and lunar months: the former consists of thirty or thirty-one, and in February of twenty-eight or twenty-nine days; the latter means the time in which the moon moves round our earth, and consists of twenty-nine days, twelve hours, and forty-four minutes; at the end of which period, we have what we call a *new moon*; at which time, you know, we only see it like a silver thread; every day it increases, as a larger part of it becomes enlightened by the sun: when the whole of the side next us is enlightened, we say it is *full moon*. After which, by degrees, we see less and less of it every night, till, at length, we return to what we call *new moon*. All *the different* appearances depend upon our

situation, and the moon's, with respect to the sun, round which we move.

I am afraid I shall not to be able to make you understand, clearly, that the earth has another motion, which is called, moving on its own axis ; which is performed in twenty-four hours ; this is done at the same time that it is moving round the sun. It moves round the sun in a year, and this causes our different seasons, of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The other motion, on its own axis, makes our day and night, and is called the diurnal motion.

I dare say you will be as much surprised as I was, when you hear that it is supposed that the moon is inhabited. This appeared so wonderful to me, that it was a long time before I could believe it ; but when I began to consider, that nothing is made in vain, and that even the fig-tree was destroyed, because it was found unprofitable, I saw the probability there was, that the moon should have its inhabitants, as well as the earth on which we live ; and as God has made such a variety of living creatures to dwell with us,

His power has, in all probability, been exerted to fill other worlds with creatures fitted to live upon them.

I hope, my dear Anne, you will not find what I have said about the sun and moon, and our earth, very hard to understand. Do not, however, feel discouraged. If you are puzzled a little at first, it will still be interesting ; and my father will help you a little ; for he gave the first instruction to your

Ever affectionate friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER VIII.

The Grove, December, 1827.

So your mother is afraid I make you *too* wise, my dear Anne! Tell her there is no danger of that, all my wish is to make you better and better acquainted with the wisdom, and power, and goodness of God. When we consider that *He* has given us our understandings, we should not be unmindful of the daily wonders which He is performing before our eyes, nor so wicked as to be indifferent about any thing which He does.

Your mother is mistaken in thinking, that astronomy is of no use; it is not only useful, but necessary for many things, even in common life. Necessity obliged men to apply themselves to astronomy: the return

of the different seasons could only be known by observing our situation with respect to the sun ; and without this knowledge it would be impossible to succeed in agriculture. If the proper season for making voyages were not previously known, sailors could not venture to take their ships such long voyages to distant countries. And, if the length of months and years were not determined, there could not be any order in our affairs, nor could the days set apart for the exercise of religion, be fixed. We can easily imagine, how delightful it must be to a good man, when he is in a distant part of the world, or upon the wide ocean, to be able to say to himself, “ This is the Sabbath, and my family and friends are, at this moment, offering up their prayers to Almighty God ; I am in their thoughts, and they are, I feel assured, supplicating the Father of mercies in my behalf ; they are praying for my preservation, and that God will bless me : our prayers shall ascend together, our hearts and thoughts are united, *though we are in different places and cannot*

see each other." How great will be the comfort and consolation he will derive from such reflections ! Thus the happiness of good men is promoted by it. So that astronomy is useful in religion, in morals, in agriculture, and in commerce : no wonder, then, that mankind should apply themselves to the study of it.

Our country has the honour of giving birth to Sir Isaac Newton, who was one of the greatest astronomers that ever lived ; so when you meet with his name at any time, or hear him spoken of, you will know that we are indebted to him for many wonderful discoveries in astronomy.

I will now tell you as much as I am able clearly to explain on this subject. The first and most wonderful thing is, the daily rising of the sun, as we call it, in the east, and his setting in the west ; after which, the moon and stars appear, still keeping the same westerly course, till we lose sight of them. This cannot long be taken notice of, before you will perceive that neither the sun, nor the moon, always rise exactly in the same

point of the heavens. If you begin to observe the sun, for instance, in the beginning of March, you will find that he seems to rise almost every day more to the northward than he did before,—that he continues longer with us, and is more immediately above our heads at mid-day. This continues till the end of June, when you will observe that he will move backwards till the end of December, or near it; when he again begins to move forwards; and so on every year.

The motion of the moon through the heavens, as well as her appearance at different times, are even more remarkable than those of the sun. When she is first seen by us, at the time she is called the *new moon*, she appears in the western part of the heavens, and seems to be at no great distance from the sun himself. Every night she not only increases in size, but removes to a greater distance from the sun, till, at last, she appears in the eastern part of the heavens, just at the time the sun disappears in the western. *After this*, you will observe, that she gradu-

ally moves further and further eastward, and therefore rises every night later and later, till at last she seems to approach the sun as nearly in the east as she did in the west, and rises only a little before him in the morning, as, in the first part of her course, she set in the west not long after him. All these different appearances are completed in the space of a month; after which, they begin and follow the same course as before. They are not, however, equally regular at all seasons of the year, for I dare say you are aware, that what is called the harvest moon, appears for several days to be stationary, consequently she rises, for a few days, nearly at the same hour each evening.

Our earth is called a planet, and, from its motion on its own axis, and its motion round the sun, are derived all the changes of night and day, and also the changes of the seasons. You must not forget this. There are six *principal* planets, besides our earth, which move round the sun: some of them have *satellites*, or moons, accompanying and

moving round them in their orbits ; as our earth has one moon. Comets also move round the sun. All these together form what is called the solar system.

Mercury is the first planet in the order of the system. It is not much larger than the moon, and is so near the sun, that we seldom see it ; when we do, it is mostly in the twilight : it is, however, very bright.

Venus, the second planet from the sun, is remarkable for its brightness : when it is to the west of the sun, it is a morning star ; when to the east, it is an evening one.

Our earth is the third planet in the system.

Mars is the fourth planet from the sun.

Jupiter is the fifth planet, and the largest that has yet been discovered, being nearly a thousand times as large as our earth. It is supposed to be five times the distance from the sun that we are, and enjoys much less light and heat than we do ; it has, however, four moons to cheer the inhabitants, if there be any.

Saturn is the sixth planet from the sun :

it has seven moons, or satellites, continually moving round it, besides a broad thin ring, which reflects light, and casts a shade upon it. The ring cannot be seen without a telescope.

There is a seventh planet, called the Herschel, or Georgium Sidus: it may be seen with the naked eye on a clear evening, if the moon be absent. Six moons have been discovered to revolve round it.

There are other stars, which are called fixed stars, from their being comparatively stationary. They do not revolve round the sun, like the planets, and have been supposed to be suns to other systems. They are at a much greater distance from us than the planets; yet a motion has been discovered in some of them, and it is supposed that they are all of them in motion.

In consequence of the earth being round, the rays of the sun fall directly on the heads of some of its inhabitants, while, on others, its rays fall in a slanting direction: this makes the cold so extremely severe at the poles; while the people who inhabit the countries

which are more directly under the sun's rays, suffer intense heat.

At the poles, day and night succeed each other at intervals of six months.

I hope, my dear Anne, you will feel still greater pleasure in looking at the heavens, which furnish us nightly with such a magnificent prospect. The more I hear and see on this subject, the more I am struck with astonishment, at the splendour and vastness of the scene.

I cannot express my obligations to Mr. Atkinson for the information which he has given me. He has taught me to know still more of the wisdom and power of God, and to see beauty, simplicity, and usefulness, in all the works of creation. They furnish an interesting and instructive lesson, and one which, I hope, will not be disregarded by

Your affectionate friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER IX.

The Grove, December, 1827.

MY DEAR ANNE,

YOU will be surprised at receiving a letter from me within the month, but since I wrote last, I have got some information from Mr. Atkinson, which is quite new to me, and which I think will interest you also: and, as it is in some degree connected with the subject of my last two letters, I thought I should like to send it you immediately, as I expect to be very much engaged after the new year comes in.

You, who are such a lover of sunshine, will easily imagine how cheerless and inanimate the whole creation would be without light. Indeed, the effects of light are quite wonderful, both in nature and art.

Mr. Atkinson tells me, that the halos, or coloured circles, which sometimes surround the moon, and the beautiful rainbows which you and I have so often admired, are all produced by the rays of light falling in clouds, mists, or rain.

When plants are deprived of light, they become pale ; and when, in hothouses, the light comes to them from one part only, they incline towards that place, as if to shew the necessity of it for their health. Without light, vegetables would exhibit but one lifeless colour. If it is intercepted, they are deprived of their beautiful shades ; they are also indebted to it for their smell, taste, and maturity.

Plants are divided into herbs, shrubs, and trees : herbs are those plants whose stalks are soft, as grass or hemlock ; shrubs and trees are of a firmer texture. The difference between these two last is, that shrubs do not grow so high as trees, and usually spread their branches nearer to the earth. Trees generally shoot out in one great stem, or *body*, and then, at a good distance from the

earth, spread into branches ;—thus the guelder rose, the honeysuckle, and the beautiful mazereon, are shrubs ; the ash, the elm, and the oak, are trees.

Some plants exhibit so much irritability on being touched, that some naturalists have argued that they must be endowed with sensation ; it is difficult to think otherwise, when, on touching the sensitive plant, it shrinks from the finger : there is a plant of this kind in our greenhouse. It is not merely touching this plant that will put the leaves in motion : they will contract on any application being made to them which would give pain to an animal. Some plants appear to have the power of moving on their stems, and presenting their flowers to the rays of light : the sunflower is of this kind ; it pursues the sun from east to west, rejoicing in its beams. It is supposed, that there are yet many plants unknown to man, and yet there have been already between forty and fifty thousand discovered in the different countries of the earth, all of which are suited to the different climates in which they grow. *In every country, however severe the cold,*

or however intense the heat, plants are found suited to the purposes they have to fulfil. Thus we find perfection in every part of the creation. But when we come to the animal world, and, above all, to the beings to whom a good God has given seeing eyes, and hearing ears, and understanding hearts, how grateful do we feel for all the varied beauties which he has spread before us, and for the many sources of pleasure with which he has furnished us. Each day presents new wonders to our eyes and to our ears. How sweet is the singing of the birds, the murmuring of the waters! Even the bleating of the lamb is grateful to our ears. And how delightful and refreshing is the perfume of the honeysuckle and the hawthorn in the hedges as the spring advances, though the snowdrops and the crocus disappear! The corn-fields begin to look green; and, as we walk through the fields, our hearts are gladdened by the sounds of rustic labour—the ploughman and hedger singing or whistling as they follow their different occupations, shewing how *sweet and cheering* is useful labour.

I shall always remember the last summer

with gratitude and pleasure, as one from which I have received the greatest improvement. I always loved the country. I think I now love it more than ever, because I know more of Him, who is the Maker and Giver of all the good which we enjoy. I trust I am also a better Christian than I was when I came here; for if I do not see God in every thing, I do think of him more frequently, and the cares of the world, and the disappointments I meet with, are less regarded by me. I try to love and serve, to the best of my ability, Him who, I feel assured, is never unmindful of me, but is ready to assist me in all cases of difficulty and danger, if I call upon Him.

I have had some difficulties to contend with, since I came here, and I have sometimes feared that I might not profit by them as I ought. Occasionally, I have been obliged to be in company with people whose manner of living and talking was very unpleasant to me: I felt that I did not approve of them, yet I had not resolution to say any thing, and I became both sad and

angry, and dissatisfied with them and myself. But I remembered a text in Scripture which applied exactly to my circumstances—*Vex not yourself because of evil-doers*. I soon felt how very right the advice was : for what good had I done by my vexation ? None, either to myself or others. I hope I have better thoughts now ; for, when I can do it with propriety, I venture to point out their mistakes, when they arise from ignorance, and endeavour to lead them to better ways of thinking and acting. If I cannot do any thing for their improvement, I try to bear with them, taking care, that if I cannot do them the good I intended, I will not give them cause to say, “She can talk like a Christian, but she cannot act like one.”


I am sure the good ladies of this house know what it is to possess a Christian spirit : all I see and hear, gives me cause to bless the day I came among them.

Our Christmas promises to be a very cheerful one ; and my little girl is very busy, and very happy at the prospect, as she is to have a young friend to stay with her. We

shall also have other company in the house during the holidays. The kitchen and hall are already dressed with holly. The ladies have no party on Christmas-day, in order that the whole family may go to church, and have some time, when they return, to think upon and enjoy the blessings which the birth of the Saviour has procured for them: and great, indeed, are the blessings which the servants in a truly Christian family enjoy. We have all been busy in our different ways; for, in addition to the hospitality in the house, which is very great, there is meat and clothing given away to the poor: so that we have all been exerting ourselves to get things ready in time, that we may really enjoy our holidays. The poor families come on Christmas eve, that they may have the comfort of their new clothing at church on Christmas-day.

I once mentioned to you, that Miss Caroline is rather a sickly child: in consequence of being so delicate, she has been much indulged, which makes her sometimes rather unreasonable. As I am so constantly with

her, I feel it more than any other person in the house. One day, when she was pettish and unreasonable, her aunt, Mrs. Harriet, came into the room, and soon found out by her countenance and manner, that all was not right. She talked so very nicely to her, that I must endeavour to tell you all I can remember, as it is suitable to every one, whether old or young, rich or poor. After telling her she feared she had been troublesome to me, she said, " You must remember, my dear child, what the Gospel teaches us. Its precepts are intended to promote love, and peace, and good-will; therefore the cultivation of an amiable disposition is a part of our religious duty; and the indulgence of an ill-temper is a breach of that duty, for which we shall have to give an account at the last day. A young lady has it much in her power to promote the cheerful happiness of the family in which she lives: in every family, each member of it must have their particular trials and disappointments. You *suffer* from ill-health: and sickness, we all *know*, will injure the best disposition, if



not counteracted by reason and religion. Gentleness and patience should be cultivated by every female ; and you should constantly bear in mind, that you can never be unkind to your fellow-creatures, without offending your Father in heaven. Try then, my dear child, to conquer the slightest feeling of ill-temper, as soon as you find it rising within you, before it is even perceived by others : do this conscientiously and perseveringly ; and may God bless your endeavours."

Ought we not all to be good, with such an example before us ? And what a contrast does such a character form to the gay and the thoughtless, who are daily seeking happiness, and cannot find it, because they seek it *from* home instead of *at* home ! It is perfectly true, that

"If solid happiness we prize,
In our own breast the jewel lies."

That you may always find it there, my dear Anne, is the sincere wish of

Your true friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER X.

The Grove, February, 1828.

MY DEAR ANNE,

BEFORE you receive this letter, you will be thinking that I have been enjoying myself so much among my new friends, that I have quite forgotten my old ones. But I can assure you this is not the case. My memory is not quite so treacherous. You were in my thoughts at the conclusion of the old year, and you were also remembered on the first morning of the new one. I did not think, on that morning, that I should be so long in thanking you for your kind wish, that the Christmas enjoyments might afford us all the pleasure we *expected*. Your wish has been most happily *realized*. I think I can answer for all the

family, as well as for myself, that we were even more gratified than we expected. Our pleasures were all of the right sort, and therefore did not disappoint our expectations. No one must ever talk to me again about the dulness of winter ; I have not known what dulness is for many months : and I begin to think that it is the proper punishment of idleness, and that the useful and industrious know nothing about it.

So you think Nancy Wood does improve a little ? How I rejoice to hear it ! Poor thing ! She does not yet feel any of the pleasures of industry, or she would not always be talking of having so much to do. If there is ever so much business before us, still we only do one thing at a time ; and if we love employment better than idleness, we have the satisfaction of knowing, that when we have finished what we are doing, there is something else ready for us to set about, which will, in its turn, be finished, and so on. I wish I could hear that she looked more happy, and went about her different

employments in an active cheerful manner :
we might then hope to see her

“Blest with a temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.”

You did, indeed, amuse me very much with the account of your visits to Mrs. Smith ; and I am well pleased that you took my advice. I am sure you will like keeping the infant-school, and the care of the library for the young people will very easily be managed with it. You will be enabled to do much good to the young in your own rank in life, by talking to them about the books they read, and recommending to each what you think best suited to her. If possible, take care that they understand that they read for instruction, as well as for amusement. It is a means of improvement which God has put into their power ; and they must be careful that the end is answered, or they will be no better than the unprofitable servant, who wrapped his talent *in a napkin*.

I have just received your letter, contain-

ing the account of Nancy Wood's illness. She must be suffering great pain; and I rejoice to think she has such a kind nurse, as I am sure you will be. You cannot do her a greater service, than by taking care that she has her medicines exactly at the times the doctor orders them to be taken, and in the proper quantities. Her life depends upon it: and you must be firm, and not mind being told that it is cruel to disturb her, or to urge her to take what she does not like. At present she is unable either to think or act for herself, poor thing; and if she lives, she will bless you for the care you have taken of her. Besides, sending for the doctor to look at her, and to feel her pulse, can do no good: he might as well stay away, if his orders are not attended to.

While you are watching by Nancy's bedside, you will have some quiet time to read your Bible: and, as you are now going through the New Testament the second time, I would advise you to take a little book, and write out some of the precepts of our blessed Lord, which strike you as being

best suited to promote contentment of mind, and a right conduct towards your family and friends; such, for instance, as the following : *Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. Be kindly affectioned one to another, in honour preferring one to another. Recompense to no man evil for evil. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Let love be without dissimulation. Be content with such things as you have. Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity. Do good, and be ready to communicate to those who are in need. Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

I will gladly tell you all I know about the apostles. I was, like you, very anxious to learn more of their history than we have in the New Testament; and I have, at different times, picked up some particulars respecting most of those who excited the greatest interest in my mind.

I will begin with John ; whose character, I think, more nearly resembles that of our Saviour, than that of any of the other apostles.

Saint John, the apostle, or evangelist, was the brother of James, and the son of Zebedee. He quitted the business of a fisherman to follow Jesus, and was his beloved disciple. He was witness to the actions and miracles of his Master, and was present at his transfiguration on Mount Tabor ; he was with him also in the Garden of Olives ; he was the only apostle who followed his Master to the cross ; and to him Jesus left the care of his mother. He was also the first apostle who knew his Lord again, after his resurrection. He preached the Gospel in Asia ; but lived principally at Ephesus, where he maintained the mother of our Lord. He was banished to the island of Patmos, by the Roman emperor, Domitian : after his death, he returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his Gospel, about the year ninety-six ; and died there about the year one hundred, aged ninety-four.

Saint Peter was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee, and was named Simon ; but Christ, when he called him to be an apostle, changed his name to Cephas, which is the same with Peter. As he was fishing on the lake of Gennesareth, with Andrew, his brother, the Son of God ordered them to leave their nets, and follow him. Peter was also witness to our Lord's transfiguration on the mount. With what deep interest do we read of his zeal in defending his Master, when the soldiers came to seize him in the garden ! and what sorrow do we feel, when we read, that he was tempted to deny that Master whom he had so bravely defended, even at the risk of his life ! His better feelings, however, soon returned, and he shewed his repentance by his tears. Saint Peter was likewise a witness of Christ's resurrection and ascension, and of the descent of the Holy Ghost. He afterwards preached the Gospel with great zeal, converted three thousand persons at his first sermon, and performed many surprising miracles, in *proof of his divine mission*. I have always

been much struck with the account of the first miracle which Peter wrought, on the lame man, who was lying at the gate of the Temple, which is called Beautiful. When he asked alms, Peter looked at him, and said, *Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I unto thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.* How simple, yet how grand! I never read the passage, without deriving much enjoyment from the ideas which it creates. It is thought, by some, that this apostle preached the Gospel in Great Britain. He was crucified at Rome, and buried in the Vatican, which is now a magnificent palace. The Emperor Constantine rebuilt the Vatican, in honour of Saint Peter, and it is justly considered one of the wonders of the world.

Let me hear from you soon; I shall feel uncertain, till you write, whether Nancy is still living.

May God give you strength, my dear Anne, to perform the good work you are engaged in: and that he may see fit to bless

the means employed for the recovery
your friend, is the sincere prayer of

Your affectionate friend,

ELIZABETH WILLI

LETTER XI.

The Grove, April, 1828.

MY DEAR ANNE,

I HAVE just received your letter, and I heartily congratulate you, on your friend being pronounced out of danger. Poor girl! how dreadfully weak and helpless she must be! and what a happy thing it is, both for you and her, that she is so patient! So she, too, was interested in hearing my last letter, and wished I would write again soon! I am glad I have it in my power to contribute to her amusement or instruction in any way. I shall therefore send off my letter as soon as possible, with my little history.

Saint Matthew, if you remember, before he was called to be an apostle, was a publican or toll-gatherer to the Romans; an of-

fice of bad repute among the Jews, on account of the covetousness and exaction of those who managed it. His office particularly consisted in gathering the customs of all merchandise which came by the sea of Galilee, and the tribute which passengers paid who went by water. Matthew was sitting at the receipt of customs, when our Saviour called him to be a disciple. It is probable, that, as he lived at Capernaum, the place of Christ's usual residence, he might have some knowledge of him before he was called. Matthew expressed much satisfaction at being called to so high an office : he invited Jesus to dine at his house, and had many of his friends to meet him, especially those of his own profession, hoping, probably, that they might be influenced by the company and conversation of Christ ; knowing that, *those who are well need not a physician, but those who are sick.* Saint Matthew continued with the rest of the apostles till after our Lord's ascension. For the first eight years afterwards, he preached in Judea. *Then he began to propagate the Gospel*

among the Gentiles. It is said, he suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, during his apostolical ministry there; but by what kind of death is quite uncertain.

Saint James (called the *Great*, in distinction to James the *Less*) was the son of Zebedee, and the brother of Saint John the evangelist; he was born at Bethsaida in Galilee. He was a witness with Saint Peter of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and accompanied our Lord to the Garden of Olives. It is believed, that James first preached the Gospel to the dispersed Jews; and afterwards returned to Judea, and preached at Jerusalem, when the Jews raised up Herod Agrippa against him, who put him to a cruel death, about the year forty-four. Saint James was the first of the apostles who suffered martyrdom. Saint Clement, of Alexandria, relates, that his accuser was so struck with his constancy, that he became a convert, and suffered with him.

Saint James, sometimes called the *Less*, was the brother of Jude, and the son of Cleophas and Mary the sister of the mother of our Lord. He is called in Scripture the Just

Jesus appeared to him in particular, after his resurrection. He was the first bishop of Jerusalem. Ananias the second, high priest of the Jews, caused him to be condemned, and delivered him into the hands of the people and the Pharisees, who threw him down the steps of the Temple, when his brains were dashed out. This was about the year sixty-two. His life was so holy, that Josephus considers the destruction of Jerusalem was a punishment inflicted on that city for his death. He wrote the epistle which bears his name.

Saint Andrew the apostle was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee, and was brother to Simon Peter: he was a zealous preacher of the Gospel in several countries, and sealed it with his blood at Patræ, a city of Achaia, suffering martyrdom, with great heroism, in the year sixty-nine.

Saint Bartholomew the apostle is esteemed to be the same as Nathanael, one of the first disciples that came to Christ. It is *thought* this apostle travelled as far as India, *to propagate* the Gospel. It is also said, that *a famous philosopher and Christian, desiring*

to imitate the apostolical zeal in propagating the Gospel, and travelling for that purpose as far as India, found there, among those who still retained the knowledge of Christ, the Gospel of Saint Matthew, written, as the tradition asserts, by Saint Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles, when he preached the Gospel in that country. From thence he returned to the northern and western parts of Asia, and preached the Gospel there. Lastly, at Albania, a city upon the Caspian Sea ; where his endeavours to reclaim the people from idolatry were crowned with martyrdom. He was crucified with his head downwards.

Saint Thomas the apostle, surnamed Didymus. He was not with the disciples when Christ appeared to them after his resurrection, and therefore would not believe that he was really risen from the dead ; but, eight days after, Christ making him feel the place where the wounds had been made in his side and in his hands, he was thoroughly convinced of that important truth. His infidelity, indeed, furnished such an *incontestible proof of our Saviour's resurrection, that it made some of the Fathers say, "Saint Tho-*

mas's incredulity was of greater service than the faith of the other apostles." Thus, you see, good springs up, where we least expect it. Saint Thomas preached the Gospel to the Ethiopians, Parthians, Medes, &c. It is even said that he preached to the Indians; and was run through with a lance, near the town of Meliapore, called the town of St. Thomas: but this is now generally believed to be a mistake, and the conversion of the people called the Christians of St. Thomas, is, with great certainty, attributed to another Thomas, who lived some centuries after the apostle of that name.

These are the most interesting particulars I have been able to collect. The sad fate of Judas Iscariot we all know full well. The fate of the other five I am unacquainted with at present. When I learn any thing more on this subject, you may depend upon my telling you. In the mean time I hope this little account may prove satisfactory to you and the invalid. If there is any other subject on which you wish for information, pray ask me, and I will endeavour to get it for you in some way. Never make

any apology for asking me questions. I like to be set to work on any thing useful. I particularly enjoy it when the information you want is connected with sacred history ; for I can truly call them

“Happy hours in which I hold
Sweet communion with my God,
When the Book of life unroll'd,
Shews the upward, onward road,
Which conducts to heaven, where rest,
Peace, and joy, await the blest.”

In the warmth of your friendship for me, you overrate my abilities. If I know more than you, I have no merit, because I have had such kind friends, that I must have been very blameable, had I not made some improvement under such good care ; and I should very ill deserve the blessing with which a good God has blessed me, if I were not *ready to communicate*. Farewell, my dear Anne.

Believe me always your true friend,

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

LETTER XII.

The Grove, May, 1828.

MY DEAR ANNE,

I VENTURED to read a part of your letter to my good Mrs. Harriet, who was much affected with the account you gave of your first walk with Nancy, after her long and painful illness. How very happy you must both have felt! A fine day in spring makes one happy at any time; but to you, who had been confined to a small sick-room for such a length of time, and to Nancy, who had just risen from a sick-bed, the feeling must have been overpoweringly grateful: and that walk in the sunshine, and the conversation you held together, will long be remembered by both of *you*.

But, my dear Anne, I have got such wonderful things to tell, that I scarcely know where to begin. What will you say, when I tell you I expect to be at home in less than a month? It is well you are not reading this before my father and mother, or you would have taken them by surprise with your exclamations of astonishment. I do, indeed, expect to return home shortly; and the cause of my doing so is so wonderful, that it makes me feel very serious, I assure you, whenever I think of it. You shall, however, hear all the plan, and then you will be able to tell it to my father and mother, in a way which will surprise them less than if they were to hear it from me. Before you tell them what the plan is, tell them I am to have a holiday; say also that I have made no promise, as I wished to consult them, and that I will not go if they disapprove of it.

I dare say, you remember my mentioning in a former letter, that Miss Caroline's papa and mamma were in India. There has been a letter from Mrs. Hume, who says she has been very poorly ever since she left England;

and she wishes her sister to send her a person who can be a companion and nurse to her. Mrs. Harriet wishes me to go, though she expresses her regret at parting with me; yet her anxiety for her sister makes her urge me to accept of the situation, as the perfect confidence she has in me makes her feel assured, that whatever kindness and attention can do, to restore her sister, will be done by me. I confess to you, I was not disposed to undertake this long voyage, which will remove me to such a distance from my family and friends: but when I think of the kind manner in which these ladies have treated me, and think of poor Mrs. Hume, sick and dispirited, with no person about her in whom she can confide, it appears selfish to refuse to go to her, and render her all the comfort and assistance in my power. Miss Hume, too, urges me to go to her mamma. She says, "Elizabeth, you must go to my mamma, and tell her all about our nice walks, and say that I am a much better girl than when she and papa *went to India*; and that you have helped to

make me good ; and that I love you very much : and if you are as kind to mamma as you have been to me, I am sure she will love you as much as I do."

I could not resist all this : therefore, if my father and mother do not decidedly object to my leaving them for so long a time, I shall certainly go. Mrs. Harriet says she shall write to Mr. Hume by me, and urge him to send her sister home immediately, if she does not bear the climate better ; so that I may possibly return to England again in less than two years.

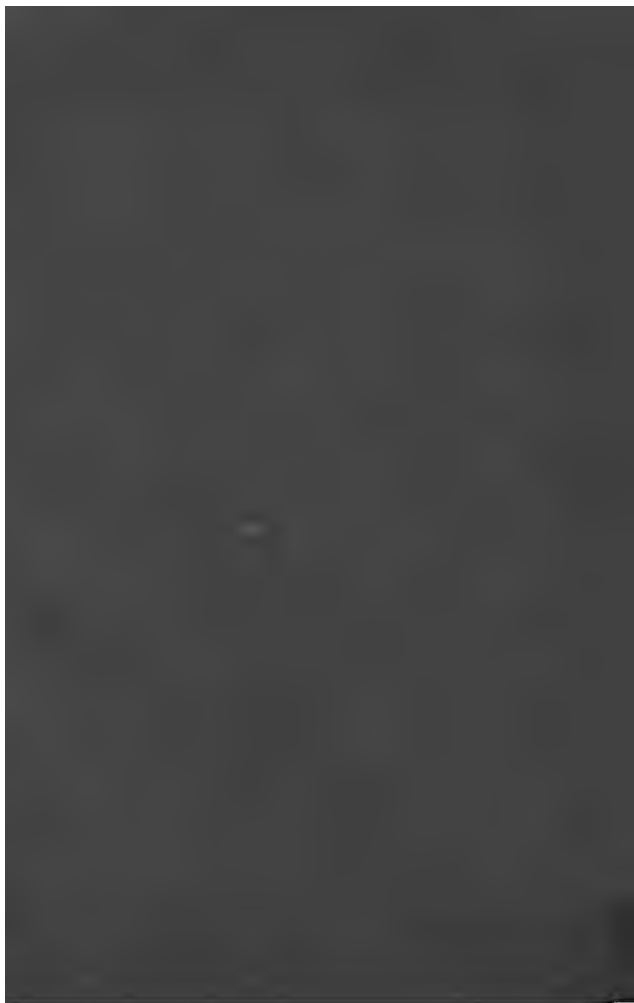
I shall write to my father and mother, as soon as I can fix the day for my return home. How happy shall I be to see you all again ! Yet I shall feel much on quitting this house, where I have found such a happy home. I shall always remember with gratitude the many advantages I have received under this roof. God's blessing is, I am sure, upon all the household ; for never was there a more prosperous and happy family.

With the cheering prospect of soon

meeting all my dear friends, I remain
dear Anne,

Yours, most affectionately,
ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

THE END.



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